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Park and Recreation Commission Minutes 12-13-11

Park and Recreation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, December 13, 2011
Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Jim Robillard, and Jen Rothenberg. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Charlotte Milan, Mustafa Varoglu and Robin Varghese

Approval of Minutes

It was decided to table the Minutes of November 8, 2011 until the next meeting.

Open Forum – Public Comments

Spy Pond Kayak Rentals Program - Charlotte Milan talked about the benefits of having a Spy Pond Kayak Rental Program run by the Recreation Department. Money could be taken on the spot; this would not be an issue – similar to the Reservoir Beach. Liability forms would have to be filled out. There would be an initial capital investment for the boats. Ms. Milan thinks it would be a good idea to ask the community for help by soliciting donations. Canoe and Kayaks do retain their value.

Ms. Rothenberg recommended contacting LL Bean. Ms. Mayer recommended talking to Charles River as well. Mr. Connelly will also be in touch with the Rowing Club.

Ms. Rothenberg also talked about her concern with noise and the neighbors that had been an issue with the Rowing Club. Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer both agreed that this would not be an issue for this type of recreational use.

The Commission all agreed that this would be a good idea. They also suggested getting feedback from the public before going forward with anything.

Article 36 One Year Commission Review

There was a discussion about shifting the times at Robbins Farm Park in the two weekday time frames by 15 minutes (currently 6:00 AM to 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM). Mr. Varoglu and Mr. Varghese both presented their perspectives. Mr. Connelly stated that both sides have valid points. The police department has stated that it is the Commission's decision. The police do stand by the fact that the current times are working. Ms. Mayer stated the weekends are working as well.

Ms. Mayer stated her concern that additional warrant articles related to off-leash dogs will be brought to Town Meeting this spring. They would like to be very cautious and conservative in making changes before Town Meeting decides on these articles.

The Commission agreed to adjust the earlier times to 6:00 AM to 7:45 AM, as a trial. If all goes well with this change, the Commission will look at the other time (8:15 AM to 9:00 AM). The Commission agreed to review the later time change at the June meeting

Mr. Varghese asked the Commission if changes could be made in conjunction with the school calendar (school vacations). The Commission agreed that this would cause more confusion, as not all public park users know or should have to know what the school calendar is. The off-leash program is a town-wide program and it is easier to understand and comply with standard calendar dates.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the 7:45 AM change. Motion was seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 3-0.

Capital Improvement Project Update

Wellington Tennis Courts – The courts are done with the exception of the final light testing in the spring. Mr. Connelly has had the nets taken down and locked the gates. The courts look great.

Robbins Farm Slide – The slides are complete, look great and work well. There was a concern about water building up. Mr. Connelly stated that the drain holes are working fine. There was also concern about children walking up the middle of the slides. Mr. Connelly has received the extra warranty – the rubber is not covered.

N-Union Basketball Courts – Ready to go. Mr. Leonard put together specifications for bidding. There will be a brand new court with benches. Preliminary budget estimate of \$53,000 to be funded by CDBG.

Thorndike Field OLRA Update – Mr. Connelly stated that construction is underway. The majority of the work will be done by early spring.

Buck Field Renovation Review – The sod went in today and it looks great. Mr. Connelly stated that Mr. Vitters has done a great job being on top of the project and has helped to insure that the details remain on track. There was discussion about why the outfield fence extensions were not put in place prior to the sod.

2013 Request Review – Mr. Connelly stated that the Capital Planning Committee has not made any recommendations on the maintenance funds -- \$32,000 yet to be determined.

Mr. Connelly also stated that the design phase for Florence will be very difficult, as the current layout for fields and play equipment is not optimal. It may take some time and will need to be looked at very closely.

The Conservation Commission will be getting involved with the boat ramp for the Reservoir – if funding is found. We are waiting to see what happens with the grant application.

Special Requests

There were no special requests.

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Connelly stated that everything is going well at the rink. The high school hockey games started. Officer James Smith is concerned with parking during games. Mr. Connelly will work with Officer Smith in regards to posting signs – though many of the surrounding streets do not have restricted parking.

Mr. Connelly has concerns with the aging mechanics (water cooler tower and zamboni). He gave Brian a request for rate changes. There is a request to replace the rink sign on the street with a new one. Mr. Connelly will review Sasaki's design sketches and is working with Mike Byrnes on zoning requirements.

There was no jamboree this year due to lack of commitment by the teams. Ms. Mayer expressed disappointment that this community-building event didn't happen.

Mr. Connelly stated that the recreation programs are going well. All programs are up and the skiing program is the biggest yet.

Committee Updates:

Portable Restrooms – N/A

Friends of Parks – N/A

Skateboard Park – N/A

Mill Brook Linear Park – N/A

Other Business

Mr. Connelly met with Charles River Aquatics, who is looking for land to donate an Olympic-size pool (2.5 million dollar value).

They are looking for a public-private partnership. We have the infrastructure, parking, and the location that was planned for a second rink. Mr. Connelly will email them a site plan.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Robillard. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation